

Dignity and Duty of a Married State.

IN A
SERMON

Preach'd at the
CELEBRATION
OF A
MARRIAGE.

IN THE
English Episcopal Church at Amsterdam.

HEBR. xiii. iv.

Marriage is honourable in all.

By JOHN COCKBURN, D. D.

The Second Edition.

LONDON:

Printed and Sold by H. Hills, in Black-Friars, near
the Water-side. For the Benefit of the Poor.

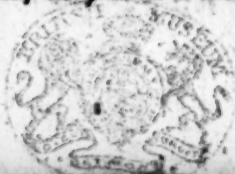
[1710.]

THE PREFACE.

IT is not usual to send single Sermons abroad, without the Recommendation of a publick Command; nor is it customary to preach at a Marriage, which was the Occasion of the following Sermon. But as there is no Law nor Reason to hinder the one, so it would seem that the other has been formerly done, and still our Liturgy supposes that it may and will be done: For the Exhortation after Marriage, is appointed to be used only in case there should be no Sermon on the Subject.

Having obtain'd from the most Venerable Burgomasters of Amsterdam, amongst other Privileges, that of Marrying according to the Manner prescribed by our Church; I judg'd my self obliged to preach on the first occasion of doing so. Here is the Discourse I then had, and I yield to the desire of publishing it, for the same Reasons I first preach'd it; that I may give my small help towards retrieving the Honour of Marriage, which has been so often burlesqu'd, and run down by the Licentiousness of the Stage. The impious Raileries and profane Witticisms which have been uttered about this matter, are regarded as Maxims of undoubted Truth; those are laugh'd at who make Marriage their Choice, as they are pity'd who are under any necessity of engaging into it.

This Mockery and Contempt of Marriage, as it is most prejudicial to the Civil State; so it has contributed very much to the growth of Atheism: for it has encouraged those unlawful Liberties, which are taken both in and without Wedlock, which cannot be defended otherwise than by denying a God, or the Authority of Sacred Scripture. When Men are byas'd, weak Arguments prevail, and any thing is readily received which flatters their Lusts and vicious Inclinations. Debauchees think it their Interest that there be no God, that Religion be discarded, and so are easily drawn to deny and disown them. And for this cause it is necessary, as to maintain the Foundation of Religion, so to vindicate its holy Institutions from the blasphemous Aspersions cast upon them; which beget a Prejudice both against them and all Religion in general. I have not that Opinion of my self, or of my performances, as to think that they alone can stop the Mouths of Gainsayers: I only desire to shew my Good-will, and offer my Endeavours. It is not absolutely necessary that all of an Army be Heroes, a Victory may be and is often forwarded by many who cannot pretend to that Character. I have not said all that might; but what is said, is certain and evident. Yet I should not be surpris'd if the Truth of it be not admitted; nay, many entertain our Attempt with Scorn. The Corruption of this Age is too deeply rooted, to be plucked up at the very first: But, Whether they will hear, or whether they forbear, they should know, that there have been Prophets among them.



M

as with
selves
that th
nor yet
fore I
this Sub
not wel
are set
In th
among
Sense cl
an Affir
the Dign
cept, re
should b
It is n
way; fo
it is so,
be by N
ble, ther
great Eff
tion or
ance of
ourable
ortant is
matter, I

HE



HEBREWS xiii. 4.

Marriage is Honourable in all.

MARRIAGE being Common and Ordinary, a Discourse about it may be thought needless, and to some unpleasing; but I do judge it neither needless nor improper. For it fares with Marriage as with most things common and ordinary, that tho' in themselves very valuable, yet they are but little regarded; so that the Generality are not sensible of the Good of them, nor yet suitably thankful for the Benefit of them. Wherefore I shall lay hold on the present Occasion to discourse of this Subject, which however common and ordinary, I believe not well understood; the Dignity and Importance of which are set forth in the words of St. Paul I have now read.

In the Original, it is only *Marriage honourable in, with or among all*: so that something must be supply'd to make the Sense clear and perfect, wherefore some render it by way of an Affirmative Proposition, as in our Translation, whereby the Dignity of Marriage is asserted; others turn it into a Precept, requiring all to hold Matrimony honourable, as if it should be, *Let Marriage be honourable*.

It is not material whether it be taken the one or the other way; for if it be a Duty to hold Marriage honourable, then it is so, because it is in it self honourable; and if marriage be by Nature, or by Virtue of its Ends and Uses honourable, then it is the Duty of all to honour it, and to have it in great Esteem: So whether the Text be an Affirmative Proposition or a Precept, it establisheth the Dignity and Importance of Marriage; for whatever is or should be esteem'd honourable, must be suppos'd excellent in its Nature, and important in its Effects and Consequences. In handling this matter, I shall do Two Things: *First*, I shall give some

Reasons why Marriage should be had in great Honour and Esteem. *Secondly*, I shall shew what is incumbent on those who enter into this state of Life, that they may reap the Good, Benefit, and Comfort of it.

I. *First*, Of the Reasons why Marriage should be had in great Honour and Esteem. To mention all, and to enlarge upon them, would take up too much time; therefore I shall only name some. And first, Marriage should be held honourable, because it is an ancient and universal Custom. Antiquity is venerable, and it is both just and usual, to regard with Veneration those Things that are of long standing. Indeed Time doth not change the Nature of Things, nor can it make that which is evil ever to be good; but both good and innocent Things are deservedly more respected, as they are the older: Now marriage is as ancient as any thing can be. 'Twas from the beginning, and commenc'd with Mankind it self. If the Calculation of some may be believ'd, Man was married on the very day he was made, and when he was but some few hours old: And what was so early begun, has ever since continued. Whithersoever Men Transported themselves, they carried the Custom; so that there never was any Nation or People which did not observe it. The most Barbarous do not live like Beasts promiscuously; and even where unlawful Liberties were common and allowed, yet Marriage was preferr'd, and accounted honourable. Where-ever Knowledge, Policy and good Government took place, and were cultivated, Marriage was distinguish'd with particular marks of Honour. Among the *Romans*, married Persons had divers Privileges above others, until the days of *Constantine*, who abolish'd those Laws, to gratifie some who betook themselves to a Celibate State, from a mistaken Notion which then prevail'd, that it was more proper for the Exercise of Religion, which was the Beginning of that Corruption and Apostacy, foretold by the Apostle, *1 Tim. iv. 1*. The *Lacedemonians* held marriage so proper and necessary, and them who despis'd it so unreasonable and dangerous, that they appointed a Fine both for them who married not at all, and for them who were late or long a marrying. How ho-

nourable

noturab
ry whe
public
they v
came t
Honou
the Day
2. F
honour
tions.
God, v
of all o
ry, nor
son on
of his C
man, jo
nifestati
he turn
of his o
Joy, wh
not hav
not wor
first at a
Choice;
honourable
would an
y, whoe
or as mea
or study c
that they
3. Th
Author c
ed into i
ther cor
ing did
male, an
ne Flesh
command

nourable Marriage was, is evident from the Solemnities every where used at the entring into it ; for this was and is a publick Declaration that it was an honourable State, and that they were worthy of Honour who enter'd into it. Hence came the Saying, That every one had Three Days of chief Honour ; the Day of one's Birth, the Day of Marriage, and the Day of Death or Burying.

2. But, *Secondly* : Christians have a better Precedent for honouring Marriage, than the Example of Men and Nations. We have the Example of *Christ*, the Eternal Son of God, whose Example outweighs the Authority and Practice of all others in the World. Indeed he Himself did not marry, nor could He, because a marriage with any single Person on Earth could not suit with his Dignity, nor the end of his Coming to the World : But he would be born of a Woman, join'd in lawful Wedlock ; and He gave the first Manifestation of his Glory at a marriage in *Cana of Galilee*, where he turned Water into Wine ; not for the simple Ostentation of his own Power, but also to contribute to that innocent Joy, which was suitable to that Occasion. This He would not have done, if marriage was either unlawful or trivial, and not worthy of all Honour. And as his shewing Himself thus first at a Marriage, was not Accidental or Occasional, but Choice ; so he chose to do it, that he might set forth the Honourableness of this State ; foreseeing that some false Spirits would arise to discredit and disparage marriage : And certainly, whoever speak against it, whoever represent it as unlawful, or as mean and unbecoming a good or wise Man, or the aim or study of Perfection ; I say, whoever do so, do thereby shew that they are not of God. For,

3. *Thirdly* : Marriage is a Divine Institution. God is the Author of it. 'Twas no Invention of Man ; nor were they led into it by Policy, Necessity or Experience, as into many other common Customs, but God himself from the Beginning did ordain it. He at the first made Man male and female, and joined them together, that *the two might become one Flesh*, for an Example to others that should follow. He commanded and ordained them to multiply and bring forth

their Kind ; but only in the State of Wedlock, and by the Imitation of that Example which he had set them in the first Man and Woman. If therefore all Divine Ordinances and Institutions should be honoured for God's sake, so should marriage ; nor can any speak dishonourably of it, without blaspheming God, and reflecting on either his Authority or Wisdom.

4. *Fourthly* : The time when marriage was instituted, adds to the Honour of it. This was before the Fall, in the State of Innocence, while Man was in his Uprightness, as he came from the Hands of God ; which proves Marriage to be suitable to the greatest Perfection and Purity of this present Life. It came not as a Remedy to After-Corruption ; 'twas not prescribed to avoid greater Inconveniencies, but the Wisdom of God saw it agreeable to a Paradise, to the purest and most perfect Condition of humane Life ; Therefore they talk falsely who make this State inconsistent with Religion ; and they are weak and ignorant Persons, who pretend that it is a clog or hindrance to their Virtue and Devotion ; yea, even to the Perfection of them. Indeed we read of some, who when they were called to the Divine Feast, excused themselves because they were married : *I have married a Wife, and cannot come* ; but this was only a Pretext to cover their Aversion and Unwillingness, for if they had valued the mercy of the Call, and been willing to embrace it, their marriage needed not to have hindred them, they would have come and brought their Wives with them. Turn over the History of all the Celibates from the beginning, can any be shewed more just and upright than *Noah*, more constant in his Faith and Obedience than *Abraham*, more holy and devout than *Job* ? and yet they, as all the other Scripture Worthies, were married, and some of them but very indifferently too. Indeed there are Temptations and Incumbrances in a married State, and so there are in a single Life. God may be served in the one as well as the other ; and who excuse themselves on the account of either, do but declare that they have not a real mind to it.

Finally,

Finally, Marriage ought to be held most honourable, for the important End of it, and the good Effects which were intended by it, and which will follow those who seek and study them aright. When God had finished the Creation, He viewed all his Works, and saw them all very good: Now Woman was included in these Works, therefore she also was found good, and consequently marriage is very good and useful; for the Woman was created for that end. As all God's Works are good, so are all his Ordinances and Institutions, and particularly this of Marriage.

Therefore, saith Solomon, *Whoever findeth a Wife, findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord*; meaning, as he explains himself

Prov. 18. 22.

in other places, a prudent, virtuous Wife; one that deserves that Honour, and answers the Character suitable to it. God by ordaining marriage, intended the Good both of private Persons and the Publick; because it was most agreeable to our Nature, and did naturally tend to further the Happiness of all in this present Life. Indeed marriage is a Yoke, which once taken on, cannot be put off till Death; or that which is worse than Death, I mean the heinous Sin and Guilt of one or other of the Parties: but it is a profitable Yoke, and it may be made easie too, if Persons have the Understanding to use it aright.

I. *First*, Marriage bringeth great Advantage to private Persons, by securing them of a constant, intimate and familiar Friend. Society and Friendship are the Life of Life. Nothing is more agreeable to our Nature, nothing more desirable. It is as natural for Man to crave them, as for the Sparks to fly upward. Hence *Aristotle* observed, that what delighted in solitariness, must be either above or below a Man; that is, either a God or a Beast; A God, because Self-sufficient; or a Beast, without Sense or Understanding, and so unable to communicate it self, as insensible of the Benefit of mutual Communication; But as most Beasts, except the Savage Kind, even love to herd together; so if this Philosopher had had that Light of Revelation which we are blest'd with, he would have found that the Godhead is not solitary, though Unity

be one of its Essential Attributes. Our Religion shews us Three Persons in the Godhead, which are one in Nature, and intimately united both in their Counsels and in the Execution of them, which makes the Felicity of the Godhead equal to the Perfection of its Nature, both of them Incomprehensible and Infinite. The more Noble any Being is, the more it affects Society and Fellowship. Because God is infinitely good, He created other Beings to partake of Himself, and by that participation to declare his Glory. Man was made after the Image of God, and consequently it must be natural to Man to seek the Fellowship of others that are after his own likeness. When God made Man and consider'd him, He saw 'twas not good for him to be alone, and for that cause proceeded to make Woman, to be a Help meet for Man. The Dominion of the World and over all Creatures, would not have given unto Man full Satisfaction, if he had been left alone without such a Companion. Let outward Circumstances be never so good, there is but half Contentment without a Friend and Copartner. 'Tis true, there is and may be a dear, a sweet and intimate Friendship between one Man and another, but the Pleasure and Benefit of such a Friendship cannot be always enjoy'd. Duty and Interest often separate them, whereas marriage, by these very Ties of Duty and Interest, makes one sure of a faithful, loving and inseparable Friend at all Times and in all Circumstances, whether better or worse. A Man must leave Father and Mother, and cleave to his Wife, and so must the Wife do to her Husband. Besides, God has so framed the Nature of Woman, and given her such particular Endowments, as render her Conversation more grateful and agreeable. The Friendship of a Man may chance to be more instructive, and may sometimes have the preference for Counsel and Advice; but a good Woman has more Charms to divert the Fancy, to ease the Spirit, and to alleviate the Mind. It is a true and notable Saying of the Son of Syrach, *Eccles. xl. 23. A Friend and Companion never meet amiss, but above both is a Wife with her Husband.* The Sweetness and Delicacy of her Temper is proper to file off that Roughness, which is ready to grow upon the Nature of Man.

There-

Therefore commonly single Persons are more morose and surly, and less conversible, than those who are well married; especially if naturally peevish and melancholly; for these grow upon Men by the lonesomness of a single Life. Indeed an ill Woman frets the Spirit and crushes the Mind; but an excellent Wife is to her Husband as *David's* Harp to *Saul*, she charms away the evil Spirit of Melancholy, which is apt to seize men by the Vexation of Business, the Incumbrances of Affairs, and the Impertinencies of the World.

Again: Marriage is of great Advantage to private Persons, because of the mutual help which they give to each other: God did not intend that the Woman should be a Clog, or Burden, or Incumbrance to a Man; He did not ordain her to live idly or sumptuously on the Sweat of his Face, but he made her to be a Help unto him; that is, to be both a Companion and Assistant, to partake of his Labours, to bear half of his Burden, as well as to share of his Happiness. He that has a prudent Wife, has double the Hands, the Eyes, the Ears and the Feet of a single Person. He can be at Home and Abroad at once; She can manage the Affairs of the House, while he is transacting Business Abroad; and so is in a better way of Thriving, of promoting the end of Life, and of providing for the Necessities and Comforts of it. Some may think that all this may be as well done by Servants; but a little Reflection on Experience shew it a mistake, for though great Wages may make a Servant faithful, they cannot give that Concernment which a Wife hath. Wherefore the wise Author I last quoted, saith, 'Blessed is the Man that hath a virtuous Wife, for the number of his Days shall be double. A virtuous Woman rejoiceth her Husband, and he shall fulfil the Years of his Life in peace. A good Wife is a good portion, which shall be given in the portion of them that fear the Lord. The Grace of a Wife delighteth her Husband, and her Discretion will sat his Bones. A silent and loving Woman is a gift of the Lord, and there is nothing so much worth to a mind well instructed. A modest and faithful Woman is a double Grace, and her continent mind cannot be valued. As the Sun when it riseth in the high Heaven,

* Heaven, so is the Beauty of a Wife in the ordering of her
 * House. *Again he saith, The Beauty of a Woman chea-*
 * eth the Countenance, and a Man loveth nothing better ;
 * there be kindness, meekness and comfort in her Tongue
 * then is not her Husband like other Men. He that getteth
 * a Wife, beginneth a possession, a help like unto himself
 * and a pillar of Rest. *Eccles. xxvi. and xxxvii.*

Thus private Persons have great Advantage by marriage.
 In the next place, the Publick receiveth no less Profit by it.
 For by this means Children are multiplied, and the People
 increased ; which is the Strength, Security and Glory of a
 State. Unlawful Liberties without Wedlock, add little to
 the Increase of People ; nor even in those Countries where
 pluralities of Wives are allowed, is it common and usual to
 have so many Children, as with us by one Man and one Wo-
 man. So marriage, according to its first Institution is more
 for the multiplication of Mankind, than any other way.

And as it tendeth to the Increase of People, which is for
 the good of the Publick, so it is the best Security of a good
 Education to them that are born, which is no less for the
 publick Good. If Children were not taken care of, they
 could not live to be Men ; and if they were not well edu-
 cated and train'd up to some Art or Profession, they would
 be of little use when grown up ; both which would be
 very much neglected, if Children were not born as now
 in lawful Wedlock. Women perhaps might have some re-
 gard to the Fruit of their Womb, but Men would take little
 thought of those, whom they knew not whether they were
 their own. But as it is now, Parents love their Children, and
 lay themselves out to provide for them, to educate them well,
 and to make them happy ; all which turneth to the Advan-
 tage of the Publick.

It was very inadvertently said of a * Great Man, That
Wives and Children were Impediments to great Enterprises of
either Virtue or Mischief, and that the best Works, and of

* Lord Bacon, in his *Essays*.

greatest Merit to the Publick, were perform'd by unmarried Childless Men: For the very contrary may be proved from History. And who can be thought more concerned for the Publick, than they who are to leave with it their Darlings, and the Pledges of their Affection? Commonly single Persons look no further than their own Times, but those who are married, extend their Thoughts and Care to Posterity. Nor are they who are married and have Children, more obnoxious to Bribery, and perverting of publick Justice; for a Servant may be worse than a Wife, and do often abuse the Master's Ear more. Nor are Wife and Children a hindrance to Charitable Works; which is one pretended Reason why marriage is forbidden the Clergy in the Church of Rome; for Covetousness and Selfishness prevail among them that are not married, as much as with those that are. There are as many of the one as of the other, stingy, narrow-soul'd, and hard-hearted, both to themselves and others, neither given to good Works. Indeed, those that have no Children should give more as they are more able; but those that have Children, have yet a greater Obligation to be Charitable, even that they may secure a Blessing to their Children, which may and will be more steadable, than a visible Inheritance, which often slippeth away: For, saith David, *I have been young and now am old, yet have I not seen the Righteous, that is, the merciful Man, forsaken, nor his Seed begging Bread; he is ever merciful and lendeth, and his Seed is blessed*, Psal. lxxvii. 25. Thus you see, that there are a great many Reasons, why marriage should be honourable among all, as is asserted or injoin'd in the Text. I proceed to

II. The other Thing propos'd; which is to shew, What is Incumbent on those who enter a married State, to the end that they may reap the Good, Benefit and Comfort of it.

This is important and necessary, but very little considered; and that is the reason why those Advantages of Marriage are not so common. Marriage is not a *Physical* but a *Moral* Cause of them, they follow not joining of Hands necessarily, as the Fire burneth; or as Meat nourisheth, which happens

happens whether we think of them or not : But how good soever a married State be, the Benefit and Comfort of it depend on the wise Behaviour of those who enter into it. they remember their Obligation, and study their Duty, they shall be happy ; but otherwise, both Shame and Misery will attend them. There are indeed many unhappy Marriages in the World ; there are very many rendred miserable by coming into this State of Life, but it is their own Fault, because they engag'd unadvisedly, nor mind what such Engagements require of them. They run into this state for some present Satisfaction or Advantage ; and having got that, they become uneasie with the perpetual Tie. They do not consider the Necessity of yielding to one another ; but as before they continue altogether Selfish and Humoursom, craving to be pleas'd, but are at no pains to please those they are join'd with. Such were mad to marry ; and by marrying, they have entail'd both Guilt and Misery on themselves for Life. The Man or Woman that marries, must resolve to deny themselves, to put off at least something of their own Humour, and to put on a ready Complaisance with others ; otherwise they can never be happy : They must resolve by all means to seek to please and gratifie, tho with some restraint on their personal Inclinations and Constitutions. Not on this Account should marriage be reckon'd a Slavery ; for this is no more than what common Conversation, and the engaging into any Society oblige one to : He should be debarred all Company, and excluded all Society, that require every body to humour and yield to him, without suitable returns ; they do not understand either Honour, Liberty, or reasonable Satisfaction, who are uneasie with the Obligation of pleasing and gratifying others. Certainly a Noble Soul and a generous Mind, will take more delight in the Occasions and Opportunities of doing a Pleasure to others, than in the Services paid to themselves. Man and Wife may reason together, but should never scold and rail, nor use contemptuous Speeches. Persons have often occasion of being angry with themselves, and so there may happen just Occasions for

both Man and Wife their shewing some displeasure with each other ; but it can never be just to do it, to the breach of Peace and Love. They must not divide and quarrel, however they may reason, except in cases where true Honour, Conscience, Religion, and the Cause of God do interpose. God must be pleased above all, He must be prefer'd to Husband or Wife ; but if nothing be requir'd which displeaseth God, any thing should be done, rather than suffer a Breach ; for better any Inconvenience than that. Husband and Wife should endeavour all that is possible to make one another easie, by mutual pleasing : This is both their Duty and their Interest ; for it is one end of the Institution. They are neither wise nor virtuous, who contend and jar for small and trivial Things, and commonly the Ruprures betwixt married Persons, are only for such Things : For the generality of Mankind let their Passions master their Reason, and are so foolishly fond of their Humours, as for them to quit their Interest. There is a most remarkable Instance of this in the History of *Peru* ; which shews the extravagancy and mischief of Humour and Passion, when not curbed. There was one by the misfortune of Shipwreck cast upon a barren desolate Rock, where there was neither Man nor Beast, nor shelter against Wind or Weather : In this miserable place he lived two Years ; and then Providence sent thither in the like manner another. The Comfort of a Companion was certainly most valuable, and the only mitigation of that miserable condition. If they had united heartily, there might be some abatement of it ; but they soon quarrel'd for some small matter, and their Difference grew to that height, that they parted, and lived at the distance of the Rock from one another ; neither, for the space of Seven Years, if I can remember right, spoke together, or saw one another : So, out of crossness of Humour, they deprived themselves of the Comfort and Advantage which Conversation and mutual Concurrence and Assistance might have given : This is a Parallel of that Man and Woman, who through Providence are tied for Life by the Bond of marriage, but so little wise for themselves, that

that rather than forego their peevish and pettish Humour they chuse to throw up their Comforts, and to make the Condition more miserable.

As the studying to please to the utmost is incumbent on married Persons, so for this Cause Love is required and absolutely necessary. It is hard to study to please those who are not well liked. Where there is Love, there is a forwardness to please; but if Love be wanting, it is shifted or awkwardly perform'd; therefore they who enter a married State should be brought into it by Love. Love should be the principal motive that brings them together; and while they are together, it should be their Care to cultivate and improve it. If Love be wanting, they will be a grief and a burden to each other; but if Love abound, they have all Joy and Contentment: Where there is Love, they part with Reluctancy and meet with Pleasure; their Hearts burn with Desires when absent, and if present they live joyfully together, as *Solomon* enjoins. Love will keep the Woman from gadding Abroad and 'twill make the Man impatient to come home. *St. Paul* saith, That *Love is the fulfilling of the Law*, concerning our Neighbour; and so it may be said of the Duties of Marriage. Love both teaches them, and prompts to the Observance of them: For all that is enjoyn'd Husband and Wife, are only proper Expressions and Declarations of true Love. He that loveth his Wife, will be far from abusing her, or treating her roughly; he will honour her himself, and endeavour to have her honour'd by others: He will deal tenderly by her and cherish her to the utmost of his power; he will not deny her the Satisfaction that are reasonable and in his power but will be active and industrious to provide for her. And if the Man do this, the Woman must be unnatural, if she be not gained by it. The Wife must love too; and if she love nothing enjoined will be grievous. Obedience which sounds so hard and so harsh to self-willed and unthinking Woman, will not be unpleasant to her that loves: For Love is obsequious and observant, and is glad of the Occasions and Opportunities of testifying it. The Obedience of the Wife is indispensable

if there be Love, it will not be complain'd of. By exacting Obedience, the Wife is not so hardly dealt with; for it is easier to obey than to command aright, and the Praise of Obedience may be due, where there is no Honour in Commanding: there is an exprefs and often repeated Command of God, that the Woman be obedient, and it becomes her to be so, even where the Man does not personally deserve it; and then she shews her regard for God, which is her Praise; and for which she shall be surely rewarded.

Finally: To ensure and compleat the Happiness of a married State, both Husband and Wife must with all care mind Religion, and keep up the Fear of God between them. This is the surest way to prevent Miscarriages; to secure against all Ruptures, and to engage to the right and serious performance of all Things proper and necessary, to promote the Peace and Happiness of this State. Religion makes all Things easy; it ties the Knot harder, and makes both willing to bear the Yoke. If the true Fear of God possess the Heart of Man and Wife, neither of them shall go astray, nor be liable to the Rack of Jealousie: No uneasy Suspicions shall disturb their Breasts. They will not provoke, but cherish one another. They will be studious to please when out of Sight, as well as in it; and whether absent or present, will be equally faithful. Where the true Fear of God is, there will be no occasion for Exhortations and Persuasions, for each will be forward to all Duty. If Persons understood it, true Piety is the greatest Charms, nor do they fade with Age. And the greatest Contentment may be expected from a Religious Husband, and a Pious Wife. This is more to be valued, than all those Things which are now the common Motives to Marriage. This is better than Houses or Possessions, than Bags of Money, or Tuns of Gold. *Favour, saith Solomon, is deceitful; and Beauty is vain; but a Woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised,* Prov. xxxi. 30. Besides, the Fear of God bringeth his Blessing, which contributes more to Peace and Happiness, than all our own Endeavours, or any outward visible Means. *Except the Lord build the House, they labour*

in vain that build it. And as He buildeth the House, makerb them that are in it to be of one Mind. All Blessing promised to them that fear the Lord, and particularly the a married State, as you may see Psal. cxxx. Thus I run through the Chief Things incumbent on Man and W that they may reap the Good and Comfort of a married S pray God that all concern'd may remember, consider and serve these Things, which would make the Church Glor the State Prosperous, and increase the Peace of Fam This would make the present Generation happy; and w draw down and entail a Blessing on Posterity.

Now unto God, who is the Author of all Good, the Fa Son and Holy Ghost, be all Glory, Honour and Pra now and for ever. Amen.



F I N I S.